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Teaching Writing to Children and Adolescents

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Explanatory Text

Perceived Awesomeness: Students Views on Teachers

People are often worried about how others perceive them. No one is more worried about this than the classroom teacher because she is stared at by the most brutally honest group of people on earth: children, ages 5-18, give or take a year or two. Young children are honest because they are learning social norms and right from wrong so often they will say things, which maybe the older child would have known to keep to himself. The older child or young adult is honest for several reasons, many of which can be attributed to hormones. For these reasons, teachers often wonder, “What do my students really think of me?” It’s true that many teachers would say they do not care, but what if what they thought was awesome? Maybe the students thought of fun ways to remember the lessons because they really enjoyed what was taught. Perhaps they felt smart when they achieved something that was not possible until a teacher came along and showed them that all things are possible. If teachers want these things, then they must be these things. Students want above everything else a teacher who is awesome, smart, and funny.

Teaching is an awesome responsibility that should not be taken lightly. Awesome is described in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as “extremely good.” Today’s teachers have to be good, especially with the new observation models and tenure reform and although the Basel reader companies are making textbooks “dumbed down” to ensure teachers are delivering the content exactly as it is presented in the teacher’s editions, the students are not going to retain the information if the person presenting it is not awesome or “causing feelings of wonder.” Of course awesome things can sometimes cause fear, but this too is a good representation of what a teacher should be because there will always be those students who mistake “nice” for “easy” and no one wants that reputation.

The word smart has it origins in Middle English. The word *smert* from which smart comes from, means “causing sharp pain.” This is another example of where “nerd” might be mistaken for “push over,” but knowing the content one teaches is so paramount. Teachers must always strive to preparedness because students’ minds come up with the craziest ideas and being prepared to field crazy questions and ideas ensures a smooth learning process. When presented with challenges, the smart teacher knows the correct course of action and can inflect pain. Not physical pain of course, but mental anguish to a teenager is easily found from the simplest suggestion of a quiz or the like.

Just because one is smart, does not mean one cannot be fun and teachers should be fun. Although teachers can cause fear and pain, that does not mean they should be doing that all the time. Our classes must be enjoyable and this becomes even more important the older students get. High school students should be having more fun than elementary school children because those last 3-4 years before they go out into the “real” world will define the type of adult they become. I for one, would much rather have confident, easy going people coming into the work place, than a scared and tired group of people. Fun is an interesting word though. Also from Middle English, it once was the word *fonnen,* which means to hoax. It is appropriate to sometimes trick students into learning. They’re amused and behaving themselves and completely unaware of the impact that the teacher is having on them. This is the most important thing of all.

There are 100,000 adjectives in the English language. Of all those words, teachers should strive for three of them: awesome, smart, and funny. These simple words can have an impact not only on the students who witness them first hand, but also on the teachers who portray them. Who does not want to be perceived as awesome and who would not want to be viewed as smart or funny? If more teachers strove to be these things, educational system and the students in that system would be much better off.